

Isaiah – The Prophet of the Holy One of Israel

I. The Man in Troubled Times

A. His Historical Frame

1. The superscription establishes his timeframe (Isaiah 1:1).
 - a. He ministered during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.
 - b. His ministry spans political stability, decline, and reform.
2. His prophetic activity unfolds over a 60 year period.

B. The Assyrian Shadow

1. Assyria dominates the geopolitical landscape (2 Kings 15–20).
 - a. Tiglath-pileser III pressures the region (2 Kings 15:29).
 - b. Sennacherib invades Judah (2 Kings 18:13).
2. The Syro-Ephraimite crisis defines a turning point (Isaiah 7:1–2).
 - a. Rezin of Syria and Pekah of Israel attack Judah.
 - b. Ahaz responds with fear rather than faith.

C. His Public Role

1. Isaiah had access to kings (Isaiah 7; 38–39).
 - a. He confronts Ahaz directly (Isaiah 7:3–4).
 - b. He counsels Hezekiah during national crisis (Isaiah 38:1–6).
2. His ministry was not isolated but politically engaged.

II. The Vision That Defined Him

A. The Context of His Call

1. The year of Uzziah’s death marked national uncertainty (Isaiah 6:1).
 - a. Earthly throne destabilized.
 - b. Heavenly throne unmoved.

B. The Holiness of the LORD

1. The seraphim declare the LORD’s holiness (Isaiah 6:3).
 - a. “Holy, holy, holy” emphasizes absolute moral separation.
 - b. The temple fills with smoke, signifying majesty and judgment (Isaiah 6:4).
2. Isaiah repeatedly uses the title “the Holy One of Israel” (Isaiah 1:4; 5:19; 10:20).

C. The Prophet’s Personal Cleansing

1. Isaiah confesses personal uncleanness (Isaiah 6:5).
 - a. His lips are unclean.
 - b. His people are unclean.
2. A live coal purges his iniquity (Isaiah 6:6–7).
3. Only after cleansing does he respond (Isaiah 6:8).

IV. The Promise of the King

A. The Immanuel Sign (Isaiah 7)

1. The sign is given in the context of political crisis (Isaiah 7:1–2).

2. Ahaz refuses to ask for a confirming sign (Isaiah 7:10–12).
3. The LORD gives a sign anyway: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14).
4. The sign carries an immediate historical dimension, tied to the fall of Syria and Israel (Isaiah 7:15–16).
5. The sign is likely fulfilled in Isaiah 8:1–4. The sign also carries a prophetic trajectory beyond the moment (Matthew 1:22–23).

B. The Royal Child (Isaiah 9)

1. The oracle shifts from darkness to light and national joy (Isaiah 9:1–3).
2. The child is born with governmental authority: “The government shall be upon his shoulder” (Isaiah 9:6).
3. The throne of David is central: “Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom” (Isaiah 9:7).
4. His titles exceed ordinary monarchy: “Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).
5. His reign is everlasting, established with judgment and justice “from henceforth even for ever” (Isaiah 9:7).

C. The Branch from Jesse (Isaiah 11)

1. A shoot emerges from the stem of Jesse, indicating the Davidic line reduced but not eliminated (Isaiah 11:1).
2. The Spirit of the LORD rests upon Him, equipping Him with wisdom, understanding, counsel, might, knowledge, and fear of the LORD (Isaiah 11:2–3).
3. He judges with righteousness and strikes with the rod of his mouth (Isaiah 11:4–5).
4. His reign brings global and creational restoration, where violence ceases and the earth is filled with the knowledge of the LORD (Isaiah 11:6–9).
5. The nations seek Him, and His reign extends beyond Israel (Isaiah 11:10).

VI. The Tradition of His Martyrdom

A. Silence of Scripture

1. The canonical text does not record Isaiah’s death.

B. Jewish Tradition

1. Babylonian Talmud (Yevamot 49b) states he was sawn in two under Manasseh.
2. This aligns with Manasseh’s violence (2 Kings 21:16).

C. Possible New Testament Allusion

1. “They were. . . sawn asunder” (Hebrews 11:37).
2. The text does not name Isaiah.
3. The identification remains traditional, not explicit.